John Reich Journal

Volume 6 / Number 2 April 1992

JRCS

JOHN REICH COLLECTOR SOCIETY
P.O. Box 135 Harrison, OH 45030

The purpose of the John Reich Collectors Society (JRCS) is to encourage the study of numismatics, particularly United States gold and silver coins minted before the introduction of the Seated Liberty design, and to provide technical and educational information concerning such coins.

Annual dues $10.00

For general membership information write to:
Office of the President, David J. Davis
P.O. Box 205, Ypsilanti, MI 48197

The **John Reich Journal** is the offical publication of the Society and is distributed to all members in good standing. Members are encouraged to submit any articles encouraging the study of nimismatics and / or relating to early United States gold and silver coins to the editors. Especially needed are articles containing new information about die varieties, die states of published die varieties, attribution methods, collections, collectors, etc. Inquiries about specific varieties will be directed to one of the experts in that series. All correspondence should be directed to:

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Cover Photos: 1829 Curled Base 2 Bust Dime (JR-10). This is the discovery piece found in Dayton, Ohio in 1973.
Courtesy of: John McCloskey, discoverer.

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Editors' Comments

Welcome to the **John Reich Journal**, 'The Next Generation.' We hope to further the work started by our former editor, Dave Davis, and bring additional exposure to Bust Coinage and the JRCS. Our immediate goals include getting the Journal back on schedule, increasing membership, developing new contributors and expanding the Journal to a quarterly publication. The last two objectives rest mainly with you, the membership. We can not produce Journals without input from you. Should we expand to a quarterly publication, we would increase from 120 pages of information to 160 pages of information each year. To realize this goal would require increased submissions of letters, questions, observations and research articles. Please do not feel like you need to be a Pulitzer Prize winning writer to contribute. We will be glad to help you around the 'rough edges' and to suggest other members who may provide help with additional information for your articles.

We would like to take a moment to introduce ourselves to those of you who are not familiar with us:

Brad Karoleff

I am a charter member of JRCS, having upgraded to a life member in 1988. I want everyone to know, up front, that I am a coin dealer. This will not be a factor that enters into my job as your co-editor, as the members of the BHNC can attest. My membership in either club has not been influenced by my profession. Besides my membership in the JRCS and BHNC, I currently hold membership in ANA, ANS, EAC, LSCC, NBS, Commemorative Society and am a member of the Board of Governors of the Cincinnati Numismatic Association. I have been collecting Capped Bust Half Dollars by Overton variety since 1976, and coins in general since 1965. I currently am interested in advanced die states of the Turban Halves. I am 32 years old, married (with children), Timothy 5 ½ and Victoria 2 ½ . Michelle, my wife of eight years, has encouraged me to accept the post of co-editor. You can thank her (or curse her) sometime in the future. I have a deep commitment to the hobby and look forward to a long and enjoyable association with the membership of the JRCS as your co-editor.

Keith G. Bellman

I have been a member of the JRCS since its second year and have been a member of the BHNC for the past four years. I am 24 years old and have been collecting coins since 1980. I have been collecting Capped Bust Half Dollars by variety for the past five years and have started a detailed study into edge varieties and 'pinches'. In the past few years, I have been unable to get a sufficient fix with Halves so I have branched my collecting to include Capped Bust Dimes and Half Dimes. I am currently a member of JRCS, BHNC, ANA and the Cincinnati Numismatic Association, where I have served as their secretary for the past four years.

We accepted this job as a way to contribute something back to the hobby we have enjoyed. People have been kind to us in answering our questions for years, and now we have the ability to repay the favor to another group of collectors. We feel that a true 'numismatist' does not work in a vacuum. They are willing to share their experiences and education with other collectors. The information learned must be distributed in order to be useful. Collectors that selfishly guard their 'secrets' do more harm than someone that shares an idea that is eventually proven incorrect. We all learn from the process of questioning the validity of a theory. We have learned more from the 'brainstorming' sessions at the ANA 'open houses' than in reading piles of information. Our hope is to bring more of this 'personal interaction' to the pages of the **JR Journal**.

You may be asking yourself, "how can I contribute something back to the hobby?" There are many ways you can help our hobby grow. Some take more time and effort than others, but here are some suggestions:

1. Write letters to the editor of a publication (**JR Journal**!)
2. Write an article for a publication (again, remember us!)
3. Answering letters and articles you read in numismatic publications.
4. Provide answers to people doing research, make your collection available for inspection or send a pressing, rubbing or description to the researcher.

5 Get someone started collecting coins.
6 Help a beginner through the difficult times of collecting. Keep them from making the same mistakes you made in the beginning.
7 Become involved with a local club, or if you are a member, accept a larger role as an officer. Volunteer to give an educational discussion at a future meeting.

In short, each of these suggestions boils down to one thing - PARTICIPATE IN THE HOBBY. Do not be a passive collector. We have experienced each of these 'levels of collecting' from being the student through being a mentor. We still wear both caps depending on the situation. We will be asking some of you for help in answering other member's questions. Please let us know your areas of expertise so we can start our 'tutor file.'

We often asked ourselves, "What can I contribute that has not already been done?" Again, the answer is in questioning everything. Reprove every accepted theory. Trying to disprove a hypothesis is the best way to understand the solution. Just think, if no one ever questioned past researchers, we would still think that dies 'sucked' instead of proving that they clashed. We would still have 'akcidefect' lines. We would still think that the castaing machine 'slipped' to produce the abnormal edges on the Capped Bust Halves. Get the picture? Even if someone who writes an article has a 'name' in the hobby, please do not feel embarrassed to challenge them to prove their theories. Sometimes the real solutions "come from the mouths of babes" who are not prejudiced by prior misinformation. Collectors have often been steered in the right direction by a non collector, or beginning collector, who has made a statement based on no former knowledge of the subject. Have an open mind and work to prove what you believe about each topic.

We would like to close by saying (on our knees) that we need submissions NOW for the scheduled July issue. This will be the ANA issue that will list the meeting times and locations for the convention activities, assuming the ANA has published them by our press time. We must have enough articles, letters, etc. to fill the pages

so that we can get the Journal and meeting information to you in time for the convention. Be sure to get busy and fill the P.O. Box to the brim with your submissions.

This brings us to the end of our first editorial in our first Journal. We hope that it is the beginning of a long and satisfying relationship for all of us. Until we meet again in the July issue ... Happy Cherrypicking.

The longest journey begins with a single step. — *Chinese Proverb*

NOTICE - BUST DIME COLLECTORS

Russ Logan has informed us that it is time to send in your updates for the Bust Dime Master Census. New members who have not previously participated in the survey are welcome to submit your census. Your identity will be kept secret by using your **JRCS** membership number as the heading for your collection. Your personal census will be kept confidential and not used for any other reason. This and other censuses compiled by the **JRCS** for its members is a valuable tool for determining rarity and condition census for varieties. Please forward your census, or questions, to the editors at:
P.O. Box 135, Harrison, Ohio 45030.

Bradley S. Karoleff / Keith G. Bellman

PLAUDITS, PANS AND PERPLEXING POINTS

JRCS Accidental profile doubling, so common on many Capped Bust Half Dollars, has drawn considerable focus recently. First Bill Atkinson drew everyone's attention with his article in Volume 3, Issue 1 (April, 1988). Then Mike Marker and later Don Parsley followed, adding considerable food for thought in the **JR Journal**.

Most often, collectors today think that double profiles only occurred on the early coinage. Recently, however, while sorting through a group of photographs I had taken earlier, I came across this photo of a double profile Kennedy Half Dollar. No doubling occurred anywhere else on the half except the profile, eye and cheek lines. History, once again , repeats itself.

As a side note (and adding one more to the list), fellow JRCS member and Half Dollar specialist Leonard Schramm, recently sent me a foil impression of an 1817 O-109 with doubling from Liberty's forehead to the bottom of her neck.

Edgar E. Souders

JRCS While clashmarks on Capped Bust Half Dollars are commonplace I thought the membership might get a kick out of this beauty. Most 'old-timers' have heard of the 'Three bars below ear' terminology, but how about this clashmarked 'Half shield below ear (!)' on this 1813 O-109 Capped Bust Half? Anyone out there have a photograph of a high grade piece showing this clashmark?

Edgar E. Souders

JRCS In the July 1990 issue of the **JR Journal**, contained in an article entitled *Conjecture on the Origin of the 1820/19 Half Dollar*, I suggested that the 1820/19 O-101 and O101a may actually be an 1820/19/18.

I asked for feedback from other JRCS members, either supporting my claim or refuting it. To date, I have had only one response, and that has come from Edgar Souders, who is in the process of studying the possibility even further by examining some high-grade specimens.

If anyone else has any other comments to add - pro or con - I would appreciate hearing from you. It would be nice to resolve this question.

Anyone who would like to discuss it can contact me at the address below. I suspect that Brad and Keith would welcome any input on the topic in the pages of the **JR Journal** as well.

William Atkinson
P.O. Drawer 1150
Murphysboro, IL 62966

JRCS

Here is a copy of a page from the recent **Rare Coin Review**, Number 8, issued by Bowers and Merena.

Please refer to the letter of August Dunn which, presumably, was directed to Q. David Bowers. Mr. Dunn is considering the start of a collection of Capped Bust Half Dollars from 1807 - 1836 in MS-60 to MS-63 grade.

The idea is commended by Mr. Bowers, and he goes on to relate many suggestions relative to such an endeavor.

You might find it worthy of use in the **JR Journal**.

Having initiated an identical collection in 1986, when it became more practical to invest in mint state coins, I can state that Mr. Bowers is absolutely correct in his probable acquisition schedule. I am about 80% complete after five years of diligent searching and attention to all necessary details. On the other hand, I am not exactly a slave to the commitment.

- George Hamilton

Thanks to Q. David Bowers for permission to reprint the following letter from ***Rare Coin Review****, Number 8.*

Q: I am considering starting a collection of Capped Bust Half Dollars 1807 - 1836 in MS-60 to MS-63 grade, for I have seen several examples and believe that they are attractive at this level, both in terms of aesthetic appearance and of market price. Do you think this is a wise move? Can you offer any suggestions? Are all dates readily available within this span? Should I collect the overdates or just the regular dates? Any help would be appreciated. - August Dunn

A: I believe you have made an excelent choice, and I commend you on it. Choose pieces carefully, or buy them from a trusted dealer , as one person's MS-60 can be another's AU-55 and, conversely, still another's MS-63. This goes for coins in slabs as well as coins that are 'raw'.

By all means collect the overdates, for they are integral to the series. One key issue, the 1815/2, is available only in overdate form. The only real stumbling block you willencounter willbe the 1817/4, which does not exist in MS-60 grade. I would suggest buying a worn example, probably paying more than the 'Guide Book' price for it if you have to. So far as I know, there are just five specimens in existence, so even at double the 'Guide Book' price, one would probably be a bargin.

In general, the earlier dates will be the hardest to find, with 1807, the first year of issue, being particularly tough, although a number of others through 1820 will be elusive. Easiest to find in MS-60 to MS-63 grades will be issues dated from 1830 through 1836 inclusive. All of this balances out, for a earlier issues cost more, they are still underpriced in relation to their true rarity, so you won't mind paying an extra premium. For example, an MS-63 1807 Half Dollar is at least 100 times rarer than an MS-63 1831 Half Dollar, but the price differentials do not reflect this.

If you pay market price or slightly more (you may have to pay over market to get particularly nice examples, and the expenditure will be worth it), and you are an aggressive buyer, you probably will be able to acquire about 50% of the dates within the first year, 80% of the dates within the first three or four years, and then the rest sometime within the decade, except that you may never find an 1815/2 which is strictly graded MS-60 or better.

I would use the 'Guide Book' as a basic key to what varieties to acquire, except that I would drop some of them from the list, as the differences are too small to notice.

Here is my suggestion for a want list, but I fully recognize that someone else's list might be different:

> 1807, 1807 50 over 20, 1808/7, 1808, 1809, 1810, 1811/0, 1811, 1812/1, 1812, 1813, 1813 50C. over UNI (a particularly interesting error, in my opinion), 1814/3, 1814 E over A in STATES (another interesting error), 1814, 1815/2, 1817/3, 1817/4, 1817, 1818/7, 1818, 1819/8, 1819, 1820/19 (among some of these, you have several choices as the 'Guide Book' listings indicate - just pick one), 1820, 1821, 1822/1 (optional; the overdate requires a bit of imagination to see) - *[ed. - this is not a 'real' overdate]*, 1822, 1823, 1824 over various dates, 1824/1, 1824, 1825, 1826, 1827/6, 1827, 1828, 1829/7, 1829, 1830, 1831, 1832, 1833, 1834 (I believe that the Small Date, Small Stars, Small Letters is the most aesthetically satisfying so far as the design is concerned), 1835, 1836 50 over 00, 1836.

This constitutes a basic listing of dates and overdates as well as a few selected engraving errors.

Good luck with your search!

Provenance & Protection For Posterity

Russell J. Logan

Recently I read that the Smithsonian cleans some of the coins that are on display. A number of the most respected dealers display their coins in PVC flips. Some of the major auction houses destroy the pedigree of a coin which fails to sell in its first appearance, hoping that a second (or third) auction appearance (complete with a new photograph and description) will be more fruitful. A major numismatic organization recently named the chemicals and detailed the process for dipping silver coins back into the brilliancy of their youth.

With actions like these, it is understandable why the collector is confused to the point where he commits irreversible damage to his coins or collecting interests.

THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT

How many times have you read the disclosure: "This holder is intended to facilitate viewing of the lot prior to the sale and is NOT recommended for permanent storage," or "Experience has shown that coins left in these PVC laden holders will discolor, lose luster or even begin to corrode"? It sounds a little like what might happen if the Surgeon General decided to investigate the nutritional value of numismatics. I would assume that the authors of these disclaimers are trying to be helpful, but in view of the frequency with which some coins have recently appeared at auction, I wonder how they define 'permanent'.

Recent articles concerning the 'green slime' associated with PVC have appeared in many leading numismatic magazines. These have been misleading and, at times, totally false. A few brave souls have tried to set the record straight but no one has offered a total solution to the problem.

PVC - WHAT IS IT?

Polyvinylchloride (or PVC for short) is a hard polymer which must be modified by a plasticizer to make pliable film for flips. It is the plasticizer which makes the flips unsafe for storing coins. PVC flips should NEVER be used for storing coins - not even for one day or even one second!

How can one be sure that his storage flips are not laden with PVC? A good indication is to observe a used flip. If there is an impression of the coin left on the flip, chances are there are problems.

A more exacting determination to detect PVC has been described by Susan Maltby in her *Saving Money* articles in **Coin World**. She describes the Beilstein test as follows: In a darkened room, take a red-hot copper wire and pierce a suspected flip, and immediately return the copper wire into the open (propane) flame and observe the color generated. A green flame flickering from the copper wire indicates that PVC is present and you should immediately find another home for your coins!

My first attempt to purge my collection of PVC flips resulted in purchasing more PVC flips. The coin dealer assured me that his 'Safety' flips that I had just purchased were inert and would not damage my coins. But coin dealers are generally not knowledgeable polymer chemists and should not be relied upon to sell archivally safe products.

POLYETHYLENE TEREPHTHALATE: MYLAR®

Numismatists are not alone in wanting to find an inert, dimensionally stable, transparent and pliable material in which to store their collections. Numismatic needs are little different from those of our syngraphic or our philatelic counterparts. Museum curators and philatelists agree that the material best suited for long term storage is Mylar D. It is sold by E. I. DuPont & Co. to its clients for fabrication into many shapes and forms. Although it is more brittle than the modified PVC flips, it is satisfactory in every respect for storing and viewing coins.

I have found Tuck Taylor of the Taylor Made Company, P. O. Box 406, Lima, PA 19037 to be most helpful in supplying my Mylar D needs. Tuck is a philatelist at heart, having recently retired after spending 36 years with DuPont selling packaging films. He can supply you with either the knowledge to select proper storage flips or the actual flips. His flips are double pocketed to permit pedigree documentation with the coin.

THE PEDIGREE

Having pedigree documentation of a particular coin adds another dimension to numismatics. In the case of our federal coinage, there have been over a hundred and fifty years of collecting and more than four generations worth of pleasure derived from these pieces. The opportunity to add your name to the pedigree is sometimes the deciding factor in purchasing the coin.

Auction houses play a major role in maintaining, or destroying, the pedigree of our coins. Although it is very popular to conduct 'name' sales, it is almost impossible to tell which lots were truly owned by the named consignor. In some instances the 'name' was a total fabrication, such as the Anderson DuPont sales of the mid 1950's. Both Anderson and DuPont were antique dealers in central Massachusetts, who consigned their client's collections to auction. More recently the alphabet sales by Bowers and Merena are good examples.

Superior Stamp and Coin created a whole new standard in the art and science of cataloging beginning with the Robinson S. Brown, Jr. collection [1986] as noted by Denis Loring in a recent edition of **Penny-Wise**. Stack's was soon to follow as evidenced by the Lovejoy Sale [1990]. Every coin was identified by its source and previous owner(s), if known. The 2 x 2 envelopes of the previous sales were included with the lots which is the ideal way to purchase a coin.

A BROKEN PEDIGREE

Unfortunately, some dealers bought these pedigree coins as generic specimens. Then they proceeded to discard the 2 x 2 auction lot insert, as well as the previous pedigree information, in favor of marketing the item to some 'investor'. These actions might be forgiven if the dealer notes the auction and lot number on his 2 x 2, but most do not and the pedigree is now lost, thus robbing the coin of much of its collector charm and historical relevance.

In other instances when the coin is 'bought in' by the auction house or is returned by a mail bidder, the coin is frequently placed in the next convenient auction with no pedigree documentation. Everything but the coin is destroyed!

The frustrations encountered when viewing high grade early federal coinage without pedigree are so insurmountable that one is frequently forced to pass on the item. For example, a high grade open collar bust dime recently sold at auction without pedigree, although it was not difficult to determine it had a Bareford provenance. It only realized 19% of the hammer price in the Bareford sale. Coins that have been owned by collectors who have either contributed to the hobby by documenting their research in a particular series or by supporting a numismatic society with time or money, will always capture the hearts (and wallets) of future collectors.

Similar problems exist with slabbing. Only on a few isolated occasions is a pedigree ever mentioned on a slab, (i.e., The King of Siam Set and the Larry Shepherd commemoratives). The rest of the time, the slab reveals no clue as to the previous owners or sale history. Even if the coin is slabbed by an auction house and great care is taken to forward the previous 2 x 2 auction lot inserts along with the slabbed coin, there is no method to store the documentation with the coin. Consequently, it may be separated from the coin unless its new owner de-slabs it.

OWNERS AUTONOMY

When consigning one's collection to an auction house, be sure that the pedigree information is included in the description of every lot. It is always more interesting to read about a coin's pedigree in a lot description than the auctioneer's opinion of either rarity or ranking of condition census. Should the auction house balk at this request, consign elsewhere.

If anonymity is desired when consigning a collection, one should still provide the source of the coin to the next owner. Remember that future buyers may find it a real turn-off if the dealer is instructed to tell a potential client: "Oh, it's from an old-time collection" or "I'm not at liberty to say." By revealing the source from whom you purchased the coin, it becomes easier to maintain the pedigree when it's time to resell. The 2 x 2 auction lot identification inserts are ideal for storing and recording the pedigree.

ESTABLISHING A PEDIGREE

If a coin is without a pedigree, it is not too late to start one! With die variety collecting in vogue, one can start the pedigree on the same 2 x 2 paper insert which indicates its variety number or auction lot number. Better yet, design your own unique 2 x 2 insert with enough information on it to identify yourself, and remember to do it on acid-free paper. Before inserting it into a Mylar flip, note the date, variety, source, year and price of the transaction, leaving enough white space for future generations to do the same!

CONCLUSION

Now that the investor market is drying up, and EF-AU coins are once again in favor, we should use the leverage that we have with our favorite dealers to remind them not to store coins in PVC flips and to preserve all traces of the pedigree. Why? Because they will command a premium, adding another dimension to our great hobby. After all, reading a coin's pedigree in an auction catalog is quite a bit more interesting than reading the auctioneer's hype.

Thirty Questions - Once Again

Edgar E. Souders

A few years ago in Volume 4, Issue 1 of the Journal, I wrote a challenging quiz about the Capped Bust Half Dollars of 1807-1836. Most took the challenge. Some members really enjoyed it while others disagreed on a few points. However, interest was stimulated (my main goal), so, I am once again back with yet another formidable quiz.

10 to 12 correct answers is considered very good.
13 to 20 - You are 'advanced specialist material'.
21 to 25 - The BHNC WANTS YOU!
26 to 30 - You are in the 'Einstein' class of Capped Bust Half Dollar collectors!

Check your score with the correct answers given at the end of the quiz. Good luck ... Again!

1. The 1817/13 Half Dollar is one of the series 'classics', but how many varieties of this overdate are there:
   (a) One
   (b) Two
   (c) Three

2. The 'Button Cap' variety of 1822 is the only variety seen with this characteristic, but is it:
   (a) O-106?
   (b) O-107?
   (c) O-108?

3. E.T. Wallis of California reported in **The Numismatist** of October 1930, a new overdate. It was the:
   (a) 1824/2/0
   (b) 1811/10
   (c) 1817/14

4. In 1820, there are how many overdated varieties?
   (a) Two
   (b) Three
   (c) Four

5. Raised irregular 'dots' or patches on a half dollar's field are usually attributable to:
   (a) Extreme uneven die polishing
   (b) Dirt on the die
   (c) A rusted die

6. The common 1836, O-106 reverse shows this interesting often overlooked feature.
   (a) Double scroll lettering
   (b) Beaded reverse border
   (c) E over S in STATES

7. There are how many varieties for the year of 1808?
   (a) Eight
   (b) Six
   (c) Ten

8. Without a doubt the most frustrating single year to attribute by Overton # is the:
   (a) 1834's
   (b) 1827's
   (c) 1817's

9. The only rare variety for 1820 is:
   (a) O-107
   (b) O-105
   (c) O-108

10. The two 1811/10 overdate (punctuated date), varieties have a:
   (a) Small 8 in the date
   (b) Medium 8 in the date
   (c) Large 8 in the date

11. The 'E over A in STATES' variety of 1814 is:
   (a) O-107
   (b) O-108
   (c) O-109

12. The rare 1827, 0-137 has a:
    (a) Large E's reverse
    (b) Large A's reverse
    (c) Large T's reverse

13. The 9's of all varieties in 1809 appear to be:
    (a) Straight up and down
    (b) Tilted toward the left
    (c) Tilted toward the right

14. The 'Laced lips' variety occurs in:
    (a) 1818
    (b) 1828
    (c) 1833

15. In 1813 the numeral 3 style used was the:
    (a) Curl topped 3
    (b) Straight top 3
    (c) Knobbed top 3

16. The rare 1812/11 is of the:
    (a) Large 8 variety
    (b) Medium 8 variety
    (c) Small 8 variety

17. There are three 'single-leaf' reverse varieties specifically noted in Al Overton's **Early Half Dollar Die Variety** book. They are:
    (a) 1813, 1814, 1817
    (b) 1812, 1814, 1817
    (c) 1814, 1817, 1819

18. The 1817 'Punctuated Date' shares the same reverse as that of the:
    (a) Key 1815/12
    (b) Rare 1817/14
    (c) Bearded Goddess

19. There are how many leaves on the reverse olive branch?
    (a) Six
    (b) Seven
    (c) Eight

20. From 1807 to 1836 the highest single year mintage of Capped Bust halves (6,546,200), occurred in:
    (a) 1827
    (b) 1834
    (c) 1836

21. Of the three overdate varieties of 1818 (over 17) only one sub-variety in late state shows the upper loop of the last eight nearly filled. It is the:
    (a) O-101a
    (b) O-102a
    (c) O-103a

22. John Reich died in New York in:
    (a) 1817
    (b) 1833
    (c) 1836

23. On the reverse of a Capped Bust Half how many berries are on the olive branch?
    (a) Two
    (b) Three
    (c) Four

24. In 1827, the 49 generally accepted varieties are made up of 'Curl base 2' and 'Square base 2' styles. Which are more common?
    (a) Curl base 2 varieties
    (b) Square base 2 varieties
    (c) Both have EXACTLY the same number of varieties

25. How many marriages (varieties) are known for the year 1810?
    (a) Six
    (b) Nine
    (c) Ten

26. When reference is made to 'three bars below ear of Liberty' this effect is due to:
    (a) Engraving error
    (b) Improper metal flowage
    (c) A clashmark from the shield

27. The rarest variety of 1823 was most likely struck in 1824. What is its Overton #?
    (a) O-112
    (b) O-113
    (c) O-114

28. The approximate diameter of a Capped Bust Half Dollar is:
    (a) 28.5 mm
    (b) 32.5 mm
    (c) 33.5 mm

29. The popular 1832 'Large Letters' reverse has an 'arm's length' attribution feature on the reverse. It is a:
    (a) Heavy die break across the left wing
    (b) Large 'Cud' on the reverse
    (c) Missing shield line

30. The eagle's head design in this photograph tells you that it is from:
    (a) 1807-1808
    (b) 1809-1811
    (c) 1835-1836

Answeres to this quiz can be found on page 25

*[ed. - Edgar Souders submitted his first 30 questions on the Halves in Volume 4, Issue 1 (July, 1989) of the **JR Journal**. We would like to see quizes on all of the series. R.L., M.S., W.D.P., etc., ... get busy!]*

Random Thoughts on 'Subs'

Phil Evans

The issuance of the fine new 'Parsley - Overton' is, I'm certain, giving hours of glorious enjoyment to many others of the afflicted, as well as myself.

I like to count things and play around with the resulting numbers. I have not, up to this point, paid much attention to the sub-varieties in the book. When you are one of the new guys, with less than 200 basic varieties to your name, it's easy to ignore the subs.

The new edition enticed me into paying more attention, and brought up some interesting numbers.

We are all constantly aware that there are 450 (or 453 with CLE's ?) basic die marriage varieties, but do you know how many listed sub-varieties there are? Do all dates have sub-varieties? What date has the most?

There are 157 sub-varieties listed in the third edition of the Overton.

Only one year lists none - and no, it's not 1815! It is 1835! Four others have only one each - 1815, 1825, 1831 and 1834.

Three years share the dubious distinction of having the highest number of 'subs' - 1817, 1818 and 1826 with 10 each. These years plus 1809, 1827 and 1829 at 9 each, have a total of 57, which is over one third of the grand total.

Only 37 of the listed 157 are not quickly described by 'die cracks',' extensive die cracks' or 'additional die cracks'.

Don Parsley's use of 'best example / worst example' die states makes for fascinating comparisons, but tell me, are there those of us who actually seek varying die states?

[ed. - You can make your own list of subs - many varieties come in varying and interesting die states. It is exciting to watch the progression of die cracks, clashes and die deterioration in general. We are always looking for articles documenting die states or opinions on die state rarity.]

The 1800 B-13 Bust Dollar - Some Thoughts on Rarity

W. David Perkins

The first Bust Dollar I purchased was an 1800 as a type coin. I found it at the Northwest Coin Show in Minneapolis in March, 1984. A Capital holder was ordered and the coin was sent off to the bank.

About a year later I discovered and purchased **The United States Early Silver Dollars** by M. H. Bolender. However, I was never successful in attributing the piece. I was stumped by the reverse. The reverse appeared to match B-8 ("AME close but do not join"), however on mine 'AM' were touching. I thought at the time this may be due to wear. The dollar went back to the bank.

In late 1987 I began to specialize in Bust Dollars by variety. It wasn't until 1990 (why I don't know) that I again tried to attribute the coin. Somehow I had missed the description of the B-13 reverse ("similar to B-8 but A & M touch"). It was a B-13 estimated as a rarity 6 by Bolender!

Is this still an R-6? Jules Reiver's suggested new rarity ratings for Bust Dollars as published in the fifth revised edition of Bolender's **Early Silver Dollar** book had the 1800 B-13 listed as being revised from an R-2 (Bolender) to an R-3 ('new'). Is this a mistake? Russell Logan listed it as an R-6 in his *Condition Census - Pre-Turban Bust Dollars* article, **John Reich Journal**, Volume 5, Issue 2.

The perfect die state of the reverse of the 1800 B-13 Bust Dollar.

The answer probably lies in the fact that today, many consider Bolender's B-18 to be a clashed die sub-variety of B-13. Bolender described the B-18 reverse as having a "die break like a spray from tip of right eagle's wing through F and clouds to second and third stars on right." This may be clashing, not a die break as thought by Bolender. Bolender's plate of the B-18 reverse shows these breaks or clash marks very clearly. In this article I will designate the B-13 as the 'perfect die state'. I have seen the clashed reverse B-13s described in catalogues, and fixed price listings, as B-13a through B-13d coming with various degrees of clashing. I will designate all of the non-perfect die states as B-13a for this article.

I am in the process of researching auction records of attributed varieties of Bust Dollars. Although the work is incomplete I have only found eleven Bust Dollars listed as B-13 from 1985 to 1991. This would indicate a little more than one appearance per year. By studying the plates at least five match Bolender's B-18 reverse of 1800, and four are not illustrated. The highest grade catalogued was an EF-40 specimen in Heritage's ANA Sale, August, 1985. Obviously those not pictured cannot be verified as to reverse die state. All of the rest were VF or below, many damaged and/or cleaned. The R-6 rarity rating for the perfect die state seems about right with a rating of R-3 overall. One might also conclude that most surviving specimens are in lower grades.

What about auction appearances from some of the great Bust Dollar collections?

The World's Greatest Collection sale (January, 1945) featured 125 varieties including 21 varieties of 1800. They were listed by Hazeltine numbers. The H-13 (B-13) was missing. All other varieties of 1800 (1 through 20) were included. Lot 104 was a H-18 (B-18) "Obv. of No. 13. Very Fine." It was estimated at $20 and sold for $30. Lot 105 was an H-18 (B-13a) "Not in Hazeltine. Similar to H-18 but obverse die cracks. Uncirculated, scarce." It sold for $20 on an estimate of $17.50.

The Fox Collection auctioned by Bolender in September, 1951 included approximately 100 varieties. There was no B-13. Lot 1536 was described as B-18a "'Spray' on reverse. Several die cracks identify this variety. Fine. Bought as Very Fine at $27.50."

Bolender offered his own collection at auction in his 183rd auction sale on Saturday, February 23, 1952. Bolender stated that the collection held 183 varieties "which is the largest, most nearly complete, and finest collection ever assembled by anyone in the world." However, even this sale lacked the B-13 variety. It is also important to note there is no plate in his book of the B-13 perfect die state reverse. Two B-18s were cataloged with his collection. Lot 157 was a B-18 with the reverse described as "die break from two stars through F. Ex. Fine, some lustre near stars and letters. A. M. Smith collection. Plate."

(Plate VIII shows both obverse and reverse) This is the plate coin in his book. It was estimated at $50 and sold for $39. The next lot, 158, offered the Fox specimen (above) with an estimate of $50. It realized $31.

In October, 1973, Superior Galleries auctioned the C. E. Gilhousen collection. Lot 1270 was an 1800 B-12 and lot 1271 was an 1800 B-14. Again, no B-13. Lot 1274 was listed as "Bolender 18d, extremely rare advanced breaks unknown to Bolender. Almost Extra Fine, deep gray tone, traces of luster; one tiny reverse rim nick but no other handling marks worth mentioning. The B-18 with clashed dies but without any die breaks is common, but with any of the extra breaks it is a great and unappreciated rarity. (Same dies as B-13, the latter, extremely rare, before dies clashed.) Ex-Bolender, Ruby." It was estimated at "$750-UP" and sold for $775!

Stack's offered the W. Earl Spies "U.S. Silver Dollars 1794-1803" collection in December, 1974. The introduction stated Mr. Spies "fell in love with the coins almost forty years ago." The collection lacked a B-13 despite the fact that the assembly began in 1923! Four B-18s were cataloged. The first, lot 201 had "the reverse with the 'spray' of die breaks (really clashes). Very Fine and choice." It sold for $370. The next, lot 202 was cataloged as "B-18A. As above (lot 201), but with the obverse breaks. The reverse breaks, however, are not quite as extended. Very Fine, with a tiny nick or two in the field." It went for $300. The third, a B-18b was described as "similar to the obverse without breaks, but the reverse 'spray' is composed of many breaks and there is reverse crumbling at 'AME'. Very Fine, with a large planchet defect from the chin to the last two stars." It realized $280. Lot 204 was called B-18c, however it was called "exceedingly rare as it is from the perfect state of the dies before the

Die breaks or clashes through the second and third stars on the right. This state matches the plate coin in Bolender's book for the B-18 reverse of 1800.

'spray' breaks started. It is the cataloger's opinion that this coin is Extremely Rare. Very Fine." It sold for $330. It was plated and appears to have two rim bumps between 11:00 and 1:00 on the obverse. This may have been mis-attributed at the time and should have been called a B-13.

Two specimens cataloged as B-13 were offered in Superior Galleries "The 1975 A.N.A. Auction Sale" in August, 1975. They were sold in the second session on Wednesday evening, August 20. Lot 992 was a VF-30 described as "well toned blue gray color, and fairly clean. Softly struck on the high points of the obverse. One of the finest known possibly the best perfect die. Ex. Baldenhofer, Ostheimer." It sold for $525. Lot 993 contained another B-13, "Clashed die reverse. Mint State 60, fully lustrous and iridescently toned. Very choice despite a small edge nick above the left upright of 'U' of United on the reverse. A trifle flat at Liberty's brow; otherwise superb. The finest known beyond doubt and worth a runaway price. Ex. Baldenhofer, Ostheimer." It realized $1,800. As you can see by the description, and plate, this is a B-18 as described by Bolender, now B-13a.

Very late die state. The clashing is very advanced now. The "fine die crack across shield and to the right" as described by Bolender (B-18a) is present. Additionally, this coin has clashing through the eagle's claw, the stem and leaves, unmentioned in Bolender.

The H. W. Blevins Estate Sale was auctioned by Superior Galleries in June, 1988. The collection was described as lacking approximately only 16 varieties of Early Dollars. An 1800 B-13 was listed and plated as lot 3767. However the reverse plate clearly shows it is not the perfect die state reverse. Lot 3779 was a B-18a. Both coins were graded F-12. Thus there was no B-13 in this extensive collection.

Superior Galleries sold the H. Roland Willasch Collection of Bust Silver Dollars in May, 1990. Lot 563 was catalogued as being the "rare early die state." It was graded VF-30 and sold for $797.50, reflecting a premium over common VF price. Both lot 564, a B-13a and lot 565, a B-13b were struck from clashed reverse

dies. Lot 565 also shows some obverse die breaks. It was noted in the catalogue that lot 565 was not part of the Willasch Collection.

Russell Logan listed only two in his condition census survey, an EF-45 and the Roland Willasch VF-30 described above. I would be interested in knowing if the EF-45 listed in the survey is a B-13 or a sub-variety. Mine is an attractive Extremely Fine of the perfect die state. The centers are somewhat weakly struck as appears to be typical for the variety.

I believe the 1800 B-13 perfect die state is an R-6, with it being a high R-7 in EF and above. Jules Reiver's revised rating of R-3 is probably about right combining the populations of Bolender's B-13 and B-18 varieties. The correct designation for the variety (marriage) is now B-13. The die states would be designated by adding a,b,c,d, etc. for progressive die breaks and clashes. I would appreciate any comments or information others may have on this variety. I would also be interested in knowing if anyone knows of any perfect die state specimens grading AU or better.

W. David Perkins
8126 S. Glencoe Court
Littleton, CO 80122

[All of the photos in this article are courtesy of the Museum of the American Numismatic Association. Margaret Voorhees, Museum Administrator searched the ANA's computer data base of over 2 million negatives for 1800 B-13 and B-18 listings. She found no B-13s (consistant with my research) and only 4 listed as B-18s out of close to 300 total 1800 Bust Dollars in their inventory. The other photos were taken by the ANA using my coins. I would like to also thank Robert W. Hoge and J. P. Martin for their assistance.]

◀ **This is the perfect die state of 1800 B-13 with no breaks.**

▶ **This obverse of B-13 shows the "two curved die breaks on obverse, one connecting the first and fourth star, the other connecting eighth and eleventh stars" as described by Bolender for the B-18a subvariety. See also lot 565 in Superior's May 27-29, 1990 Willasch Collection sale.**

A Report on an Unlisted Reverse Die State in the Capped Bust Half Dimes

David Hensley

I have recently obtained an 1836 Large 5C, 3 over reversed 3, V-4 (Breen:3003), Half Dime. The piece had been lightly cleaned but is now beginning to retone. I grade the coin in the EF-AU range. The V-4 is listed as being available only in early die state.

This specimen may well be an interesting little footnote in the history of the Mint, for it would seem to denote a day when the fellow punching the dies was having a really bad time. My example must be a SUPER early state. The 3 over reversed 3 on the obverse is extremely sharp, but the real story is on the reverse. There are numerous features (save one) mentioned nowhere in any of the literature: TRIPLE punched U in UNITED, repunching evident on top of I in same, the bottom of E in STATES and on the bottom curves of 5 and C in 5C. The 5 in 5C also has the curved top of a previous 5 plainly visible at a much different angle. All repunching is very bold.

I suspect this die state may be unique, but would hope that everyone will double check their 1836 V-4's and let me know what turns up. Any members wishing to contact me may do so by writing:

David Hensley
P.O. Box 680
Syracuse, N.Y. 13201

Answers to Thirty Questions - Once Again

1-a	2-b	3-c	4-a	5-c	6-b
7-c	8-b	9-a	10-a	11-b	12-b
13-c	14-c	15-b	16-a	17-b	18-b
19-c	20-c	21-b	22-b	23-a	24-b
25-c	26-c	27-b	28-b	29-a	30-a

A Capped Bust Half Love Token?

Edgar E. Souders

The dust was still in the air, from the now waiting wagon, as he handed her the token of his affection. Calvin and Lydia's initials had been skillfully engraved and enameled on the planed reverse of the 1831 Capped Bust Half Dollar. 'L' and 'C' were now eternally bonded.

> "I'll be back Lydia," Calvin shouted as the wagon pulled away.
>
> Lydia stood there clutching the token until the wagon passed over the horizon. Then, after a moment, she opened her hand to view her new possession.
>
> "Hey! Wait a minute Calvin. What's this?" she yelled.

And so, the story may have gone something like this so many years ago. But wait, there is more; Every once in a while something odd comes across my desk that begs to have an article written about it. And this soon to be discussed object was just such a 'something'.

One Tuesday the mail brought a small package from Anthony Vigliotta (Capped Bust Half Dollar specialist, author and Editor of the BHNC Newsletter). The letter read, in part;

> "Edgar, enclosed ... is a love token. It is a beautiful enameled token. You may want to take some photo's of it as it is a rather unique piece."

I removed the fancy engraved / enameled love token from the flip for a closer examination. The work was excellent - very detailed and precise.

Reverse of the enameled Bust Half Love Token with the initials 'L' and 'C'.

As many of you know, love tokens were quite common in days gone by. Often times they were designed with the intention of professing one's love to a member of the opposite sex.

Coins of the era were planed down on one or both sides and initials (often intertwined), names, a message or a picture was engraved onto the smoothed side - thus creating the token / love piece. These were then turned into a brooch pin, lapel pin, necklace pendant, bracelet or cuff-links.

Interestingly, the vast majority of love tokens found today were made from Seated Dimes, however, finding them on Seated Quarters, Half Dimes, and other denominations is not an uncommon occurrence. Nevertheless, it is quite uncommon to find a love token on a Capped Bust Half Dollar.

So ... did Calvin ever keep his word and return to Lydia? Tough to call in our little version of the story. You see Ol' Calvin may have been somewhat of a scoundrel. The 1831 half dollar / love token is a counterfeit! That is, more correctly, that the love token portion is real, but the Bustie is bogus!

This interesting piece is a cast contemporary counterfeit and appears to have been cast (two piece mold) from an original 1831 half dollar (Obverse #1, used on 0-101 and 0-102). The bogus piece weighs-in light at just under 12 grams and is slightly under 32 mm in diameter (likely due to the shrinking of the metal as it cooled in the mold). The obverse surface is granular.

Obverse of the counterfeit 1831 Bust Half Dollar Love Token.

So, dear reader, were Calvin's intentions toward Lydia honorable? Or was his love just as phony as his token? This time I think I will let you finish the ending - one of the 'fun parts' about studying interesting specimens like this.

While we may never know the true story of this old odd piece (and perhaps it's better that way!), at the very least we have 'a' story. Something better than simply saying,

(continues on page 35)

In Depth Description of the 1832 B-2 Quarter

David Finkelstein

I recently obtained a nice EF-AU 1832 Bust Quarter. Browning's descriptions of the B-1 and B-2 varieties are not as comprehensive as the descriptions for varieties of other dates, so I was not sure as to which variety I had purchased. I was confident that the obverse matched (both B-1 and B-2 share a common obverse), but I couldn't match the reverse die. Browning states that both reverse dies are 'perfect'. My coin clearly showed a strongly repunched UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Hoping that I had discovered a new variety, I sent my coin to Jules Reiver for inspection. Let me state here that I have sent other Bust Quarters to Jules in the past, convinced that I had discovered new varieties. This time was no exception.

I would like to document an expanded description of the 1832 B-2 Quarter. The reverse is not 'perfect' as Browning states, but rather appears to be large letters punched over small letters.

OBVERSE CHARACTERISTICS:
The 2 in the date is under the curl, off centered slightly to the left. Star 1 is further from the bust than stars 7, 8 and 13. Star 13 is close to the hair, with the lower point closer than the upper point. The lower outside points of star 11 are recut. The two outside points and lower point of star 12 are also recut. Stars 8 and 9 are slightly closer than stars 9 and 10. A die crack connects the uppermost tip of star 13 to the crotch between the two inside points of star 12, then continues through the uppermost point to midway between stars 11 and 12.

REVERSE CHARACTERISTICS:
The eagle has no tongue and the arrows and arrowheads are long and thin. Letters UNITED STATES OF AMERICA are recut, with large letters punched over small letters. The serifs of the small T can be seen inside the larger T of UNITED. The upper inside vertical is strongly doubled on the E of UNITED. The serifs of the smaller T's in STATES can be seen inside both of the larger T's. The second S in STATES shows the lower serif of the smaller S to the right of the lower serif of the larger S. The right base of the M in AMERICA is strongly doubled to the south, and the second A is strongly doubled to the right. The C of 25C is doubled such that the lower end of the C appears to be split. There is a large period after the C.

SHIELD CHARACTERISTICS:
Lines 1 and 3 of stripe 1 extends boldly to crossbar 2. Lines 2 and 3 of stripe 6 also extends to crossbar 2. Line 3 of stripe 2 and all three lines of stripe 3 extend below the shield.

The King of Siam Bust Half

Russell J. Logan

As the volume of numismatic literature regarding U.S. coinage has more than doubled during the past 20 years, so have the inconsistencies and downright errors. Much of this literature has originated from the commercial sector in hopes of promoting either a particular coin or collection. These writings often copy previous descriptions without checking for accuracy. Often they totally ignore contemporary lot descriptions in previous sales if they distract from the hype of the present offering. The superlatives such as, 'the finest known', 'R-8' and 'unique', are used so frequently in the auction catalogs that one may conclude that all the coins worth owning are under the gavel in that very sale. The references to the commercial population reports also add to this paradox by concluding that all coins worthy of submission have already been slabbed (but only once) ... The end result is that once a coin is touted as the finest known in a catalog, it retains that title forever, despite the fact that five more examples in higher grades have subsequently surfaced.

FIGURE I - The nine piece King of Siam set as assembled during the late 1970's. Note the presence of the half dime.

Once this avalanche of 'knowledge' has descended upon the collecting fraternity, it is very difficult to reverse the trend. Such is the case with the King of Siam Proof Set. The highlight of the King of Siam set is obviously the 1804 Dollar. This coin dominates the remaining 8 (9?) coins in the set due to the controversy behind it and the other 1804 Dollars. (See Figure I) Kenneth Bressett and Eric Newman have laid to rest most of the controversy concerning these dollars, except the premiums that they still command at auction. The 1804 Eagle is probably the second most visible coin in the set because it possesses most of the same attributes of the dollar. The other coins that comprise the set are of equal importance and should be recognized as such. Subsequently, they should be properly attributed both by 'Red Book' and die variety.

So why did Superior Galleries attribute the half dollar as Overton 103 in the May 28, 1990 Father Flanagan's Boys Town Sale? Was it because Stacks listed it as an O-103 in their eight page color brochure dated 1989? Or was it because Kenneth Bressett described it as an Overton-103 in the lot description of Bowers & Merena's October 14, 1987 sale? Or was it because Walter Breen pegged it as O-103 in his 1977 **Encyclopedia of United States and Colonial Proof Coins** book? Breen cited Stewart Witham's observations in his 'Proof' book when he claimed that two varieties of the large date and stars with large letter reverse exist in proof. Stew Witham was the preeminent student of Bust Halves during the 'dark ages' between Beistle (1929) and Overton (1967). He was a frequent contributor to **Numismatic Scrapbook** during the 50's and 60's and made significant contributions to the publications of both Al Overton and Pat Paton during the mid 1960's. But Stew Witham did not see the King of Siam half dollar until 1978, a year after Breen's book had been published. Don Parsley all but ignored the Proof Bust Half Dollars in the third edition of Overton. He did, however, manage to include a note following the 1834 O-103 description, stating that this marriage was used to strike the famous King of Siam proof 66 (65?) specimen.

FIGURE II - The small letters reverse of the King of Siam Bust Half Dollar, Overton 104. Note the strike weakness in the area of 50 C.

One does not need a Ph.D. in numismatics to determine that the King of Siam Half Dollar has a small letter reverse! All the

photographs used in the promotional sales brochures reveal that the King of Siam half dollar is an Overton 104! (See Figure II) Closer examination of the half dollar photographs reveal little detail in most of the obverse stars and a tiny vertical scratch on the cheek bone just below the ear curl. (See Figure III) This scratch is evident on all the photographs that accompanied the literature mentioned above, so we can conclude that the coin was misattributed and not substituted.

These facts shed new light on the proof half dollars of 1834. Although Walter Breen suggests that all 1834 proof half dollars have large date with large letters and that all proof small letter reverses have proven to be the Crushed Lettered Edge variety (O-122; Breen:4709). Further investigation reveals that Norweb III:3107 was also a large date small letter reverse in proof. It, as well as the King of Siam piece, exhibits weakness of strike in the obverse stars and at 50 C. The Norweb piece is also an O-104 and sold for $28,600. This same reverse was also used to strike the 1836 O-102 (Breen:4724), a marriage also found in proof, although this author has never seen one.

The emission order work on the bust halves by Ivan Leaman and Don Gunnet once again confirm the evidence as presented by Eric P. Newman and Kenneth E. Bressett in their book **The Fantastic 1804 Dollar**. The large date, large letter 1834 halves were the first 1834 halves off the press. The O-104's were minted in mid 1834, leaving time enough for a December deadline for the presentation sets shipped to the Far East.

Special thanks must go to Stew Witham for providing all his notes and the photos of the King of Siam set. Stew viewed the set in Lester Merkin's bank vault on May 5, 1978, a time during which no one even suspected the set was in the United States. He properly attributed the half as an O-104 and wrote an article for The Numismatist only to have it rejected by its editor, N. Neil Harris.

It's now been a year and a half since the set was last offered for sale; long enough for another exposure. Any wagers on the published Overton number on this round?

FIGURE III - The large date obverse of the 1834 Capped Bust Half Dollar in the King of Siam set. Note the weak strike of the stars and tiny scratch below ear curl.

The Stock Sale

Wayne M. Smith
(Father of Mark)

Down here in the south we have a thing known as the 'Stock Sale'. This historic institution sells cows, hogs, goats and other agricultural livestock. I grew up in a rural atmosphere, where the Stock Sale was, and still is, a way of life. On Thursday, I'm supposed to be there in my pickup truck, as you never know when you might want to buy a bushel of peaches, apples, cabbage, or any other produce in season.

Why in the world would any **JR Journal** reader be the least bit interested in such a local community special event? Read on ...

I save old money, and I especially like the old stuff with that lady facing left on the front. Do you know that some old money with the exact same dates, don't look exactly alike?

In the past few years, in addition to fresh vegetables, the Stock Sale has allowed dealers to sell crafts and other 'flea market items' in the parking lot. Rest assured, you will still have ample opportunity to buy livestock, but that goes on inside the building. How many times do you have the opportunity to buy a rare coin, hog, mule, goat and watermelon at one place?

I know a little bit about money, and there is a flea market guy who sells old coins, guns, knives, arrowheads and other valuable flea market items under a yellow umbrella. He is a good buddy of mine. He sells me his old money right.

He had a worn out, real small silver coin. It was cute and I just bought it. I did not know much about it. My crazy boy said "something or another Valentine and R-7" ... Whatever that means. He also said that one old half dollar might be an R-6! Do you think I should keep these coins?

I am looking forward to next Thursday. If you want to find me and answer my question, you know where I'll be.

This story is a satirical representation of the true story surrounding my discovery of an 1830 V-4 Half Dime and an 1809 O-109c Half Dollar (now listed as an R-4).

Rare die varieties can be found in the most unlikely places!

Counterstamped Bust Quarters: Factual and Not-Quite-Factual

Larry Blackwelder

The recent articles in the **JR Journal** on counterstamped Bust Quarters and several references in auction catalogs have once again awakened my interest in this mystery of early numismatics. As an avid Bust Quarter collector, I noticed the counterstamped 'variety' not because of the counterstamp (I actually considered them to be defaced coins), but because of the consistently high grades in which they were found. Since my collection was mainly VF-EF, these were coins to be desired and rated a long look at the bourse table or auction.

Let me state clearly that I have no ideas about the purpose of the counterstamps, nor do I have even a working hypothesis. Reading everyone else's ideas, however, brought to mind one of the keystone rules of being a good Sherlock Holmes - you have to consider all of the facts, not just the ones that fit your solution.

In lieu of another proposal, I thought that I would try to gather, all in one place, what we really know about these coins and then let everyone else try to solve the riddle. So here is my collection of what we KNOW to be true and a little of what we THINK to be true.

FACT:
The letters 'E' and 'L' are used.

CONJECTURE:
Other letters have been mentioned (most frequently 'M' and 'R'), but there is no evidence to support the existence of any other letters. Additional letters must be dismissed until someone provides this evidence.

FACT:
The counterstamps appear only on 1815 and one variety of 1825 Bust Quarters.

CONJECTURE:
The same punches appear to have been used for both years. This is close to a 'fact', but without a documented review of numerous pieces and some distinguishing feature (such as a missing serif), I would not want to wager anything important on this one.

FACT:
The existing coins are all in high grades for Bust Quarters. The 'worst' one I have seen was EF-40. Most appear to have some wear, but mint state pieces are not uncommon (I have found four). This is an often overlooked fact that would be hard to explain with most of the theories that I have heard. Perhaps the coin were held until the late 1800's or early 1900's and then released into circulation. They would not have circulated long before being pulled from circulation.

FACT:
The 'E' is always centered over the cap and the 'L' is always in the field to the left of the cap. The locations are quite precise - could this be a clue? Location might help to distinguish between counterstamps since the letters themselves are not very visible on high grade pieces. Was quick recognition required?

CONJECTURE:
Care was taken not to damage the reverse of the coin. The battle rages between the believers of the 'at the Mint' theory and the believers of the 'outside the Mint' theory. We can only guess based on what we see; it is risky to assume that care was intended based on the fact that the coins were not damaged. Any one want to try an experiment? (Remember, it must be an Uncirculated large size Bust Quarter for the results to be valid.)

I'm in league with the 'outside the Mint' theory. Considering that the Mint was still using screw presses in 1825, the workers would have had to set up a jig to do the job using a reverse die. Why bother? Also, I would expect them to use a normal Mint punch; they had plenty of E's and L's available.

CONJECTURE:
All the pieces were struck on or after 1825 using leftover 1815 dies. This would make the job easier not to have to explain a ten year gap. However, I see no evidence to support this claim. During 1825, the Mint did use many older dies as evidenced by numerous overdates. Also, no quarters were actually minted during 1816 and 1817, so it is plausible that the 1815 dies ended up in the bottom of the box (back of the drawer?) and were not found until the Mint exhausted the existing production dies.

Mark Hotz's comment in the last issue (Volume 5, Issue 2, page 22) that Lafayette visited the United States in 1824 and 1825 is of little value if the 1815's were actually minted in 1815. (I personally think this tidbit of information has potential.)

CONJECTURE:
There seems to be a severe imbalance between the number of each date and letter. I have catalogued the following coins:

1815 'E'	11	1825 'E'	3	Total 'E'	14
1815 'L'	4	1825 'L'	2	Total 'L'	6
1815 Total	15	1825 Total	5		

I can't make any pattern out of this. I would appreciate any additional information on total numbers. If you send information, please provide provenance so that we won't double book.

OK Mark, Walter, Bob and anyone else ... I've done my part. Can anyone else conjure up a story that fits the facts and solve the mystery?

A CAPPED BUST HALF LOVE TOKEN?

(continued from page 27)

"I pulled it out of a junk box full of culls," for even the culls have stories to tell.

You say you do not want to finish the story? OK ... Ah, what the heck ... The wagon that took Calvin away was a wagon all right, a barred paddy wagon, because Ol' Calvin had just been convicted of counterfeiting - Forgive me Lydia! (Hey, it's my story!)

For those with an interest in these small expressions of miniature art and love, you might wish to contact the Love Token Society. Also, LTS President, Lloyd Entenmann recently wrote a book on this very subject and it is a worthy addition to any numismatist's library. You can send your inquiries to:

Love Token Society
P.O. Box 1049
Huntington Valley, PA 19006

Bust Half Fever
Leonard Schramm

The following is a brief description of the stages and the symptoms of this illness.
THERE IS NO CURE!

STAGE ONE: *Indifference*
The ability to look at a Bust Half Dollar and show little or no interest.

STAGE TWO: *Recognition*
The sudden realization that a Bust Half Dollar is indeed a very attractive coin. One victim was heard to say, "It seemed to glow when I touched it."

STAGE THREE: *Curiosity*
The desire to know what is meant by the terms overdate, repunched date, clashed dies, recut stars, extending shield lines and the like.

STAGE FOUR: *The Introduction*
The decision to start a date set of Capped Bust Half Dollars. At this time the collector feels that he or she is in control. Sad, but true.

STAGE FIVE: *The Book*
Obtaining a copy of **Early Half Dollar Die Varieties**, by Al C. Overton.

STAGE SIX: *The Red Book Set*
A date set is no longer enough. This is usually followed rather quickly by 'The Breen Set'.

STAGE SEVEN: *Semi-Advanced Stage*
The Red Book Set and the Breen Set, however modified, are now nearly completed. With no where to go, the collector turns to die varieties. Soon, interest in other areas of his or her collection will be gone ... never to return.

STAGE EIGHT: *Advanced Stage*
Grade and price no longer have any meaning. At this time, most, if not all of the collector's other holdings, have been sold to finance the craving for more Bust Halves. There is no turning back. The collector never had a chance from the beginning.

STAGE NINE: *Rage*
The thought that someone else may have bought a needed variety before it was seen by the collector is unbearable. This, for some unexplained reason, is the only stage of 'The Fever' that is curable. The remedy is available but requires some degree of knowledge and a huge amount of good luck. Simply stated, 'cherrypick an R-5'. At this stage, it can be done with the calmness of a mass murderer.

STAGE TEN: *Terminal*
The metamorphosis is now complete. There is now only ONE coin. Duplicates are bought simply because 'I had to have it'. Every Bust Half has to be examined and notifications made as to it's die state. 'Bust Half Fever' is now in the collector's blood forever and is now in fact, or in essence, A BUST HALF NUT.

Lenny is a very active member of the Bust Half Nut Club.

The Bust Half Nut Club is really not a club in the traditional definition of the word. There are no officers, no by-laws, no elections, etc. that come to mind when one thinks of traditional organizations. BHNC currently consists of 70 collectors of Capped Bust Half Dollars. Their goals are to assemble, as nearly as possible, a complete set of lettered edge halves (1807 - 1836) by die variety, as listed in the latest edition of Overton's **Early Half Dollar Die Varieties**.

The club publishes a newsletter about every other month, and issues a census of each individual member's holdings on a semi-annual basis.

Bust Half collectors can obtain more information on the Bust Half Nut Club by writing to us at the address on the inside front cover, or to:

Irv Kalter
P.O. Box 4875
Margate, FL 33063.

The Bust Nut Quest Continues ...

William P. Brodniak, Jr.

So, here I am stuck at number sixty-six,
still yet, so far away.
It seems as if it's an eternity,
but I am taking it day by day.

The past nine months have been a whirl,
I've been buying up a storm.
Just got to be a Bust Half Nut,
in any way, shape or form!

I know there's those that understand,
and there are those who think I'm *crazy*!
Collecting 'Busties' is fun and challenging,
and with all of those varieties, you can't get lazy!

It almost seems as if the dealers might know.
Is it the glimmer in my eyes?
When I approach their table and ask for Busts,
the price always seems to rise!

Now, I know that there are Busts out there,
but you would never know to ask them.
They'll pull out a '32 in Extremely Fine
and start pitching it's a hard to find gem!

They tout their Fines as VF's or better,
cleaned or dipped coins don't seem to matter.
"That's my price, I cannot budge!"
To these dealers I say, "See you later!"

The real fun comes in cherry picking
a scarce or rare attribution.
For the joy received with such a find,
there just is no substitution!

For those of you who know the feeling,
we share a common thread.
Collecting Busts rewards our soul,
and we'll gladly give up our butter and bread!

There are those who collect Busts by yearly dates,
the 'Redbook', Breen numbers or Type.
For me, Al Overton varieties
have stolen my hearts delight!

Oh sure there are many, hundreds in fact,
but that matters not to me.
For I have a lifetime to set my pace,
to reach it, we'll just have to see.

Besides my collecting, I also enjoy
writing these poems and lyrics.
It's pleasurable to contribute to the hobby,
and I thank you for being such kind critics.

I've made many a friend through collecting Busts,
met at shows, through clubs and many a letter.
I would like to thank you all so much,
for you make my life so much better!

You have given me hope and encouragement
to continue on my quest,
when my doubts were high and spirits low
your support was truly blessed!

So, with thirty-four to go before I 'Bust',
I wanted to take this time,
to update you on my variety progress
and let you know that I'm doing just fine!

1829 Curled Base 2 Dime - Discovery Piece

John McCloskey

The cover of this issue present pictures of the obverse and reverse of the discovery specimen of the 1829 curled base 2 dime. This coin was purchased at a one day show in Dayton, Ohio in 1973 for $20 and was the specimen used to write the description for the JRCS Bust Dime book, published in 1984. The purchase price makes this transaction look like a wonderful bargain today, but at the time, it created no particular impression. In 1973 no one knew what varieties existed nor which varieties were rare.

I started collecting Bust Dimes in 1968, and before long, I had completed a date set. While reference books were available for other silver 'Bust' series, there was no published reference book available for Bust Dimes. I therefore attempted to describe the dies so that I could use these descriptions at shows to identify the different varieties. By 1973 I already had eight varieties for 1829 and was looking for other varieties of this relatively common date. I found it easier to distinguish the reverse dies because the lettering UNITED STATES OF AMERICA was punched into the reverse die one letter at a time. The different positions of the letters relative to each other, and relative to lettering in the scroll, proved to be a good way to identify the reverse dies. When I examined the 1829 dime that would turn out to be the curled base 2 variety, I studied the reverse and determined that it was different from the 8 pieces that I already owned. I looked at the obverse and only noted the die crack that ran from the neck to the bust as being distinctive.

I purchased the coin, and when I got home, I placed it side by side with my other 1829 specimens on a table, viewing the reverse. I noted that it had a new reverse and was pleased that I had been able to purchase a new variety at the show. I then turned all of my 1829 dimes over and studied the obverse features for distinctive characteristics. It didn't take me long to recognize that my new coin had a date distinctively different from the other pieces. I was thrilled to discover the curled base 2 feature, but did not realize how important a discovery this would be. I knew from Overton's **Early Half Dollar Die Varieties** reference book that the 1827 and 1828 halves came with both the square base 2 and the curled base 2 punches in the date. At the time it didn't seem too surprising to find both styles of punches used on the 1829 dimes.

After I recognized my new purchase as the curled base 2 variety, I began searching for a higher grade specimen. Only when I failed to turn up another example after extensive searching, did I realize that I must have stumbled upon an extremely rare variety. I told

other collectors about the variety and it has been a source of collector interest ever since. While I have not been able to locate another example in nineteen years of searching, other specimens have surfaced over the years. Presently, about 12 examples of this variety are known to exist.

The rarity of this distinctive variety makes it a highly prized variety in the Bust Dime series. This experience has helped to keep me interested in die varieties. It has also made me more keenly aware of the thrill that can be experienced when you discover a variety that has escaped detection for almost 150 years.

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